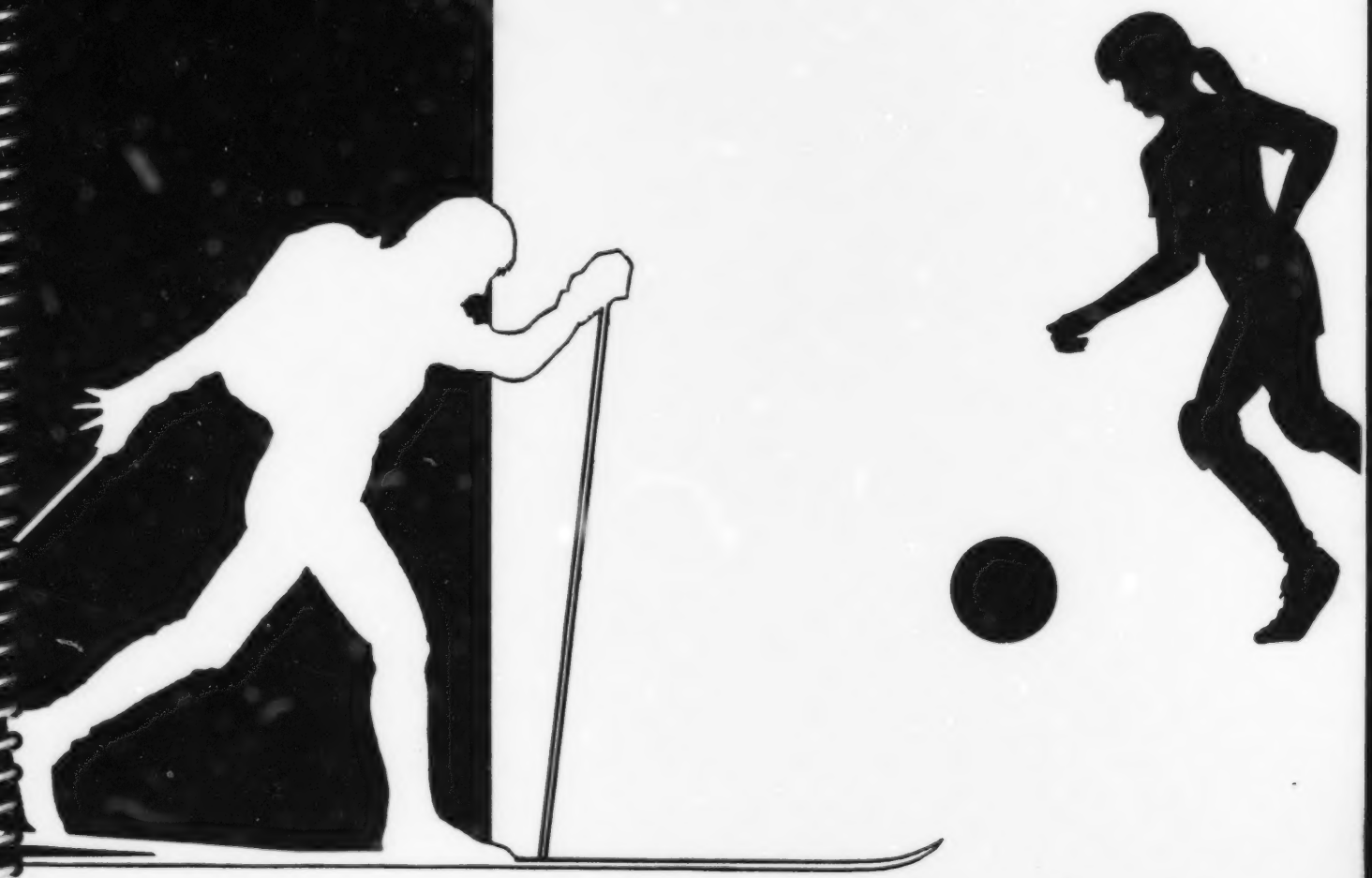
BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION



1992

Alberta
EDUCATION

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Alberta Education. Environmental and Outdoor Education Teacher Resource Manual. 1991.

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- Safety in the Playspace
- Playground Safety
- Safe Exercises
- First Aid
- Safety Practices in the Weight Room

Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (CAHPER). Safety Oriented Guidelines for Outdoor Education. Glenda Hanna, 1986.

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Edmonton Public Schools. Safety Guidelines for Elementary Schools. Mike Hay, 1990.

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DISCLAIMER

The purpose of this monograph is to encourage the development of policies and safety procedures by school boards and schools.

This document is not intended as a treatise on legal liability nor does it replace the necessity of consulting legal counsel regarding liability for accidents which may occur during physical education activities. However, it does provide certain standards that can be used as a guide by physical educators and administrators in addressing the safety component of the physical education program. In this regard, it is hoped that the document will help:

- establish general school safety guidelines in physical education for the province of Alberta
- serve as a guide for administrators regarding safety in physical education
- serve as a guide for local safety committees charged with making recommendations on specific safety guidelines in physical education.

School boards and private schools are encouraged to establish a safety committee to interpret the material in this document and advise school boards about how best to apply this information to local conditions. The safety committee should consult with the school insurer regarding school safety guidelines. The safety committee could:

- recommend appropriate supplies and equipment for use in instructional and co-instructional programs
- develop an inspection procedure and schedule for all physical and health education facilities, including playing surfaces and major equipment
- develop safety policies related to transportation, field trips, the various physical education dimensions, and first aid qualifications of the staff
- develop a safety manual in which safety guidelines and policies are recorded
- develop an emergency procedure to be used in the event of an injury
- recommend roles and responsibilities of principals, teachers and support staff.

PREFACE

"It is the responsibility of the teacher to take every precaution to ensure the safety of the student in the gymnasium and on the playing field."

- **Alberta Education, Elementary Physical Education Curriculum Guide, 1983, p. 85.**

The safety of students is of the utmost importance and should at all times be given high priority by the entire education community. Safety is the concern of teachers, administrators and parents.

The learner outcomes stated in the Elementary and Secondary Physical Education Curriculum Guides for Alberta refer to safety in aquatics, dance, fitness, games, gymnastics, outdoor pursuits, and track and field. School boards should consider developing policy and safety procedures for aquatics, gymnastics and outdoor pursuits, in particular.

Well-planned programs will reduce the frequency and severity of injuries.

LEGAL LIABILITY

Physical educators have become increasingly concerned about legal liability resulting from injuries which may occur while students are participating in physical education programs. Legal liability is dependent upon the existence of three elements.

1. There must be a duty or standard of care owed to students. Physical educators have such a duty of care imposed upon them because they are entrusted with the care of the students.

2. There must be a breach of the duty or standard of care. The standard of care expected of physical education teachers is that of a "careful parent". Teachers are expected to employ the same amount of caution that careful or prudent parents would display in the care of their own children.

3. There must be damage resulting from breach of the duty of care. Recognized legal damage would be physical injury, economic loss or possible nervous shock. There must be a connection between the damage or injury and an act of negligence by the teacher.

Because there exists an inherent risk of injury in most physical education settings, physical educators must be careful not to breach the standard of care owed to their students. It is only if a student is injured while exposed to an unreasonable risk that physical educators can be considered negligent. Physical educators who can answer each of the following questions in the affirmative are unlikely to be operating in a manner that could be considered negligent.

- Is the activity suitable to the age and mental and physical condition of the participants?

- Have the participants been progressively taught and coached to perform the activity properly and to avoid the dangers inherent in the activity? (Day book and lesson plans indicate this.)

- Is the equipment adequate and suitably arranged?

- Is the activity being supervised properly for the inherent risk that is involved?

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY

Most accidents can be prevented. Teachers have the responsibility to stop any activity that they feel is potentially dangerous. The best advice is, "If you don't feel comfortable with what you see happening on the playground, in the hallways, classroom or gym, then you should either stop the activity or modify it."

- Prior to undertaking activities not specified in the provincial curriculum, teachers must ensure that the insurance coverage held by the school board/ private school covers that activity.

- Teachers must ensure that they are up-to-date on additions and deletions to the curriculum.

Note: Normally, if physical educators are acting in the course of their employment, the school authority will be vicariously liable. Therefore, school authorities should ensure that they are insured against any losses arising from legal action taken as a result of a physical education injury.

SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Because there will always be some risk of injury associated with physical education, the school and teacher are responsible for minimizing the possibility of mishaps occurring. This can best be achieved by providing a safe learning environment. Such an environment can be established and maintained by ensuring that:

- all students change from their regular school clothing to physical education attire that facilitates freedom of movement and promotes safety
- facilities and equipment are in good working order and appropriate for the activity
- teaching/learning are sound; teachers consider the readiness of the students before choosing activities
- students are suitably supervised
- students know safety rules.

ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

All school boards should have a policy which outlines procedures in case of an accident.

Each school administrator should have:

- a set of school safety rules
- a first aid kit accessible to all staff
- forms to be used by teachers when reporting an injury
- emergency procedures posted in the gymnasium.

The physical education teacher should be familiar with safety procedures, accident reporting forms, and first aid procedures.

PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

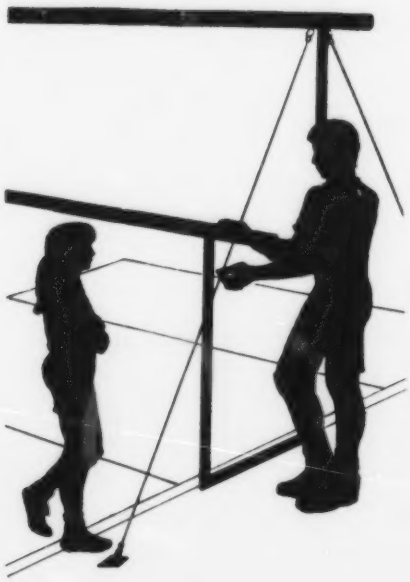
All students should be encouraged to use protective equipment as necessary.

- Protective equipment should be CSA approved and suitably sized.
- Eye protection is strongly recommended for all sports.
- Dental protection should be considered for contact sports.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS WHILE TEACHING

INSTRUCTION

The essence of safety lies in the teacher's ability to maintain a safe learning environment at all times. It is important that the teacher consider the following recommendations related to instruction:



- Base programs on current knowledge of students' physical development.
- Plan lessons to allow for students' gradual progress and development of skills.
- Encourage students to recognize the importance of rules and regulations that promote safety in all their activities.
- Assign student activities that suit the students' abilities and never force them to participate.
- Encourage students to use personal judgment and common sense at all times when participating in a physical activity.
- Develop students' attitudes of self-control, self-discipline, responsibility and consideration for others. For example:
  - do not do anything that would cause you harm
  - do not do anything that might place someone else in a dangerous situation
  - do not do anything that would be harmful to the environment.
- Establish an appropriate teaching/learning environment in the gymnasium. (For example, maintain an acceptable noise level, one that complements the nature of the student activity.)
- Not allow students to begin activities before the arrival or after the departure of the teacher.
- Never leave students unsupervised.

- Warn students of possible risks in an activity and give proper advice on how to avoid hazards.
- Not force students to perform any activity if they are fearful.
- Allow students to rest if they complain of tiredness or illness.
- Abide by medical requests for exemption from activity.
- Not let students begin an activity before the instructions are completed.
- Make sure that instructions are clear, concise and understood by all.
- Give special attention to the teaching of high-risk activities.
- Make sure students understand the inherent dangers in activity and facilities.
- Keep students working on assigned tasks.
- Maintain a view of the entire class and scan the gymnasium frequently.
- Use suitable conditioning and warm-up activities. Some aerobic work should be done before stretching.
- Teach new skills progressively.
- Ensure that students wear appropriate footwear and clothing. Running shoes or bare feet are the only possible choices for footwear. Heavy or loose-fitting clothing should be secured or removed. Watches and jewelry should be removed.
- Provide special supervision in change and shower room areas.
- Discourage show-offs. Daring anyone under any circumstances is not to be tolerated.

- Not send students out of the gymnasium as a disciplinary procedure.
- Remind students of hazards such as goal posts, net standards, walls, windows, doors, heat registers, etc.
- Remove hazards and control the hazards that cannot be removed.
- Stress control of momentum, especially while students are running, rolling and landing after jumping from heights. Discourage the use of walls as stopping and turning points.
- Not allow students to throw, kick, hit or shoot anything against a wall if someone is between them and the wall, unless it is a planned part of the activity.

ACCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES

Accident report forms may report only medically-treated injuries or all accidents, near-accidents and equipment problems. Forms are generally designed to collect information and facilitate the investigation of accidents.

A well-designed and properly completed report form can be very valuable in clarifying certain aspects of an accident when legal liability is in question. The form can be used as evidence in the event of a law suit.

Accident reports should include:

- identification of the activity
- date, time and place of accident
- identification of supervisor(s) on duty
- identification of participant(s)
- description of accident or near-accident
- description of injury and/or damage
- cause(s), circumstances and contributing factors of accident or near-accident
- action taken by supervisor (and others, if applicable)

- names, phone numbers and addresses of witnesses
- description and arrival time of medical unit, if appropriate
- medical diagnosis and treatment
- date of medical clearance for return to participation
- identification and signature of reporter
- date and time report was completed.

Staff should have written instructions regarding accident reporting and follow-up procedures.

(See Appendix B for a Sample Accident Report Form.)

FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

School boards and schools are encouraged to establish a system for inspecting and maintaining facilities, equipment and supplies on a regular basis in accordance with local policy.

- Establish a standard procedure for obtaining and returning equipment and supplies.

- Store all equipment properly and safely.

- Establish procedures for setting up, taking down and transporting equipment and teach them to the students.

- Use equipment only for its designed purpose.

- Be sure all exits are accessible and establish emergency procedures.

- In the interest of safety, check and ensure that:

  - the equipment has been properly assembled
  - the equipment is adjusted to a suitable height for the activity and age of the students
  - the equipment is properly spaced for various tasks
  - the equipment is in good working order
  - improvised equipment is suitable for the demands placed upon it.

  (See Appendix C for Sample Equipment Safety and Repair Check.)

- Check equipment as it is being set up for wear, stability and malfunction.

- Tape loose ends of metal cables.

- Ensure that:

  - fixtures and floor plates are secure and properly recessed
  - bench surfaces are smooth and free from slivers, and that all footpads are in place to keep the benches level and stable
  - box horse is free of roughness and any slivers and rips in the leather covering
  - mats are free of tears or holes
  - springboards are free of roughness, looseness and rips in the rubber covering at the end of the board
  - high jump landing pads are free of rips in the mesh or covering
  - high jump pads are filled with an adequate amount of foam
  - outside high jump and long jump pits have sufficient sand, no buildup ridges around the pits, and a smooth takeoff area
  - floor hockey nets are free of sharp or jagged exposed edges
  - paddle bats are free from rough edges and cracked handles
  - batting tees are used with adequate swing room and batters instructed to stay within that area while practising.

- Check wall-mounted climbers to ensure that:

  - the climber moves in and out smoothly
  - floor locking pins are all inserted properly when the climber is against the wall or pulled out
  - the climber locks and releases easily from the wall hooks
  - the securing cable at the top of the climber is tight when the climber is locked into position
  - spacer bars fit properly over the end support pins, and do not wobble excessively or come off the support pins too easily

- the large bar across the top front is not used by students as part of the climbing equipment
- the wooden ladder is not rough, the locks attach firmly and the rubber pads are in good condition
- the locking rings on the parallel bars slide securely over the sleeve, and there is no lateral movement when the bar is locked into place
- climbing ropes are not frayed (if they are, bind with tape)
- the ropes are long enough to be used by the tallest and the shortest students, and the ends are free of knots.

- Ensure that mechanisms on the climber, backboards, and pulley on posts are working smoothly.

- Encourage students to wear helmets for:

  - recreational and instructional skating (especially beginners)
  - bicycle trips and ice games, such as broomball, hockey and races.

STUDENT RULES FOR SAFETY

It is important to develop and discuss safety rules with students. The following rules are some that should be identified through this process:

- Be responsible for your own safety as well as the safety of others.

- Do not begin any activity before the arrival of or after the departure of the teacher.

- Participate in activities only under proper supervision.

- Do not touch anyone else unless it is a required part of the activity (no bumping, pushing or grabbing).

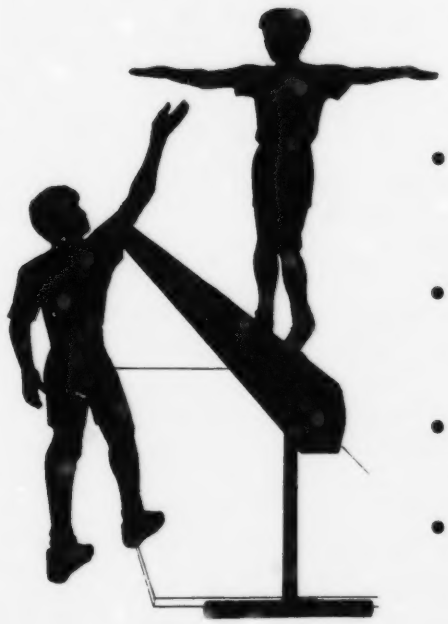
- Maintain an appropriate noise level.

- Stop immediately on the signal.

- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear.
- Wear protective equipment where required.
- Refrain from any horseplay in any area or during any activity.
- Follow the rules of the game or activity.
- Make sure equipment is secure and safe before use.
- Report all broken or faulty equipment or unsafe conditions to the teacher immediately.
- Store all equipment safely and properly.
- Report all accidents to the teacher, no matter how minor.
- Be aware of and follow school procedures in all emergencies.
- Follow the safety procedure for the use of each piece of equipment and for each activity:
  - do not throw, kick, shoot or hit something against the wall if someone is between you and the wall, unless it is a planned part of the activity
  - no throwing of bats in softball games
  - no wild and dangerous swings with paddle bats
  - keep floor hockey sticks below waist height at all times. Body checking, slashing, spearing or cross-checking are not tolerated at any time
  - always land on your feet when jumping down from any height
  - no aerial somersaults in classroom gymnastics
  - softball catchers wear masks or else stand well behind the batter
  - floor hockey goalies wear protective eye wear.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR PROGRAMMING SCHOOL GYMNASTIC PROGRAMS

INSTRUCTION



Most schools participate safely in school gymnastic programs due to the care and planning of the teachers involved.

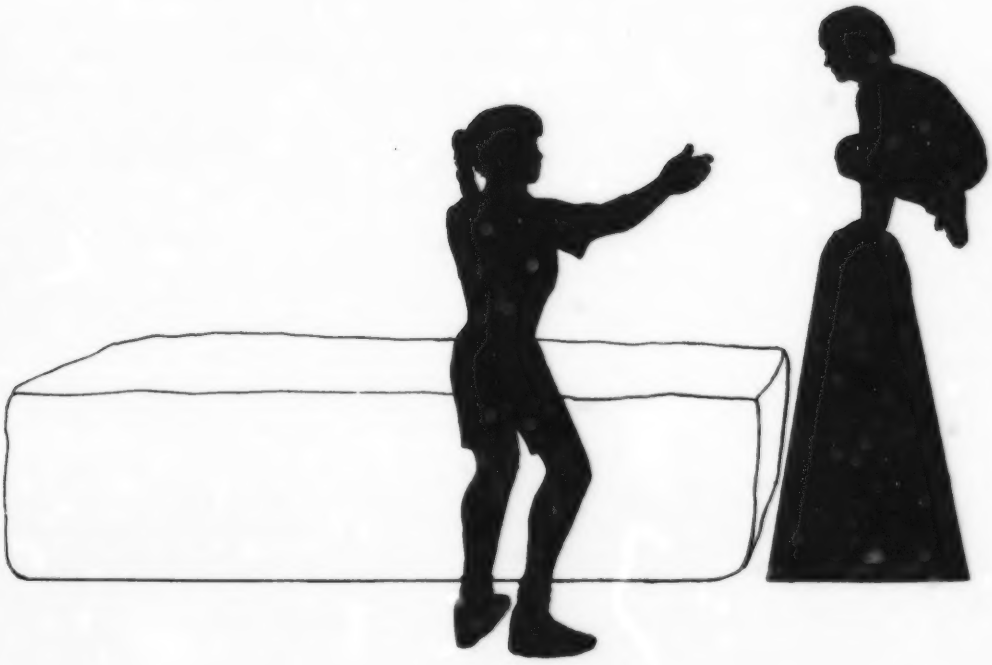
- Safety considerations for the teacher:
  - set appropriate learning goals
  - set expectations that reflect previous accomplishments:
    - progression of content and skills
    - progressing within the lesson
  - do not allow a student to attempt a stunt that you, as a teacher, are uncomfortable with.
- Avoid competition with others so that the students are not urged to do something more difficult than they are capable of handling.
- Give students opportunities to develop control of body momentum in such activities as landing from jumps and balance position.
- Where speed is part of an activity, ensure students have skills to control their actions.
- In demonstrations, cover a range of abilities to prevent students from attempting to duplicate only the difficult tasks.
- Ensure students are in a safe position when instructions are being given. If on the climber, students should either come down to the floor or be in an upright position with both hands and feet anchored.
- When using spotters, teach spotting techniques with appropriate progressions. Spotters should understand their responsibilities.
- Always ensure students land on their feet when jumping down from any height.

- Allow no aerial somersaults in classroom gymnastics. Local school board permission is required to extend any portion of the gymnastics curriculum.

EQUIPMENT

- Provide opportunities to develop skill on the floor before applying it to any apparatus.
- When large apparatus is introduced into group work, divide the class into groups of not more than four or five students per group.
- If equipment is improvised, ensure it is suitable to the demands placed on it.
- Properly space all gymnastics equipment for the various tasks assigned.
- Use mats as part of the apparatus.
- Place mats under and surrounding equipment wherever students may dismount from heights, expectedly or unexpectedly.
- Do not allow students to use the large bar at the top front of the climber. It is a support bar only.
- Adjust the height of the ladder and bar on the climber to fit the activity, interest and ability of the class.
- Do not place inclined benches in a steep position. Students must be able to walk up the bench.
- Have students climb down ropes rather than slide down them.
- If using the crash pad (portable high jump pit), do so with great care. No diving into the pad or landing on the stomach or chest. Landings should be on the feet.
- Adhere strictly to local board policy on the use of trampolines or trampettes.

- Always check any equipment set up by the students. Ensure that:
  - the climber is locked into position by the upper securing cable
  - floor pins are all locked in place
  - bars and ladders are all locked on
  - inclined benches are secure.
- Check for splinters on wooden surfaces—benches, ladders, springboards and horses.
- Do not leave spaces between mats or overlap mats.
- Check mats for tears or holes.



There are four main stages in planning for safe outdoor trips:

1. risk anticipation and preparation
2. ongoing risk assessment and risk reduction
3. emergency response
4. post-trip follow-up.

Educational expeditions in the outdoors are recommended and encouraged as an integral part of the environmental and outdoor education course, but teachers and students should be engaging in activities commensurate with their level of training and ability. Safety is not a question of merely following procedures and policies correctly; it involves exercising situation-specific judgment throughout the program. As judgment is the product of experience, students should have the opportunity to make mistakes in a guided-discovery teaching situation. Teachers or leaders should never get into situations that are beyond their ability to ensure the well-being of the students.

RISK ANTICIPATION AND PREPARATION

The preparation stage is the most important part of any trip. Many of the mistakes commonly made while on the trail can be anticipated and moderated at this stage. For example, if a group is familiar with hypothermia, they are more likely to be dressed properly, and the risk of getting cold and wet is reduced. If they are familiar with the early signs of hypothermia, they are more likely to recognize that their core temperature is dipping before it becomes a critical problem. And finally, if hypothermia does become a critical problem, they will have the knowledge, skills and equipment to treat it properly.

The preparation stage includes:

- Pre-trip communication and administration
- Pre-trip logistics
- *Student preparation.*

PRE-TRIP COMMUNICATION AND ADMINISTRATION

- Pre-trip administration includes:
  - parental permission forms
  - health information forms
  - school/system authorization forms
  - accident report forms
  - route cards and evacuation routes
  - inventory of content of first aid kit.
- Planned activities should conform to laws and regulations regarding:
  - trespassing
  - national park permits
  - restrictions on camping, such as open fires, fishing regulations, size of group, etc.
- Parents, school administration and park authorities (or others who would be informed in the event of an injury or other circumstances) should have:
  - itineraries (route cards)
  - lists of participants
  - communication channels (e.g., contact lists for current rescue services in area)
  - emergency response plans.
- Board and school policies and practices should be understood by principals, teachers, parents, volunteers and students. These policies and practices should include:
  - volunteer policies and expectations
  - insurance criteria for coverage
  - budget requirements

- supervision requirements
- transportation requirements
- educational criteria
- authorization requirements
- procedures in the event of a calamity
- procedures for informing the media and others.

- Students and parents should be informed about and understand potential hazards and risks (either at pre-trip meetings or in a handout that goes home to parents).

- Leaders should be familiar with the area in which the trip is to be conducted.

PRE-TRIP LOGISTICS

Some information about pre-trip logistics (transportation, equipment, and so on) should be included in pre-trip communications that go out to parents and administrators.

- Transportation considerations include:

  - luggage (limitations of space)
  - meeting place and time
  - mode of travel
  - emergency vehicle
  - driver coordination/licensing
  - luggage and vehicle keys

- Equipment considerations include:

  - equipment testing and setup (e.g., stoves, tents)
  - group equipment needs
  - student equipment needs
  - rentals versus purchases
  - first aid kit to be included in each vehicle.

- Facility considerations include:

  - reservations
  - deposits
  - cancellation insurance.

- Departure considerations include:
  - area policies (e.g., some parks check parking lots before shifts end)
  - weather report and forecast
  - back country registration and permits
  - current area information (e.g., bear scares, potential slide areas).

- Pre-trip training in a particular skill area (e.g., canoeing, skiing, first aid, backpacking).

PREPARATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Teachers should ensure that students and all participants are prepared for the experience in every way possible.

- Are participants mentally and physically capable of undertaking the activity as initially planned? Has the pre-trip training been extensive enough? Is the trip reasonable (e.g., weight of packs, distance, elevation gain)?

- Is medical information about all participants (students, teachers, assistants), including past and present medical problems (e.g., diabetes, hypersensitivity, heart problems) and how medication is to be administered, recorded on a medical record card?

  (See Appendix D for a Sample Medical Information Card.)

- What background experience and knowledge do students have? Other leaders and volunteers?

- Are packs checked before the trip to determine if participants have the proper gear (e.g., proper clothing and footwear)?

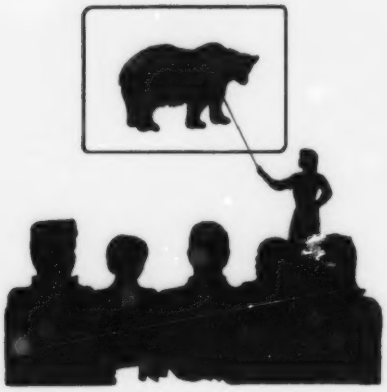
- Have participants been given training in what procedures they should follow if they become lost or separated from the group?

- Can participants demonstrate the basic knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for safe, comfortable, outdoor experiences of all kinds, in all seasons? The preparation and training must be commensurate with the degree of difficulty of the trip.

ONGOING RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK REDUCTION

Risk reduction depends on judgment and experience. Judgment is the product of experience. Experience includes recognizing factors, such as deteriorating weather, a tiring group or increasingly difficult rapids, and including those parameters in the judgment process. It is important that the students are aware of decisions a teacher makes so that they will gain experience in this critical area. Recognition skills can be taught in the classroom and during the preparation stage. For example, students may never have seen a grizzly bear in the wild but after seeing a picture or video in the classroom and discussing the risk involved and the means of reducing it, they are better prepared to cope if they do meet a grizzly bear.

A significant aspect of ongoing risk management and risk reduction is group management. The skills are:



- pacing (e.g., speed of travel, rest stops, distance travelled, awareness of fitness level of all participants)
- group control (e.g., lead and sweep, position of leader, regrouping procedures, signal systems, buddy systems)
- objective hazard recognition in the field (e.g., weather, terrain, flora and fauna)
- task allocation (e.g, shelter, cooking, water, waste disposal)
- group and organizational rules and norms
- subjective hazard recognition in the field (e.g., level of group energy, level of cooperation).

Group size is also an important consideration (e.g., potential environmental impact, level of supervision required, effective communication).

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

If the group has been well prepared and appropriate judgment has been exercised to this point, the teacher will have maximized the number of options the group has to choose from to respond to an emergency situation. Proper recognition leads to a relatively short list of considerations in an emergency situation:

- Emergency Response Action Plan
  - accident site approach considerations
  - administering first aid
  - signalling
  - evacuation plan
  - external assistance procedure.
- Group Management in an Emergency Situation
  - student response to injury
  - student involvement.

POST-TRIP FOLLOW-UP

- Integrating the experience through:
  - trip journals
  - debriefing (formal and informal)
  - recommendations for future trips.
- Celebrating the trip (newsletters, bulletin boards, slide shows).
- Post-trip administration:
  - trip log update
  - final evaluation.

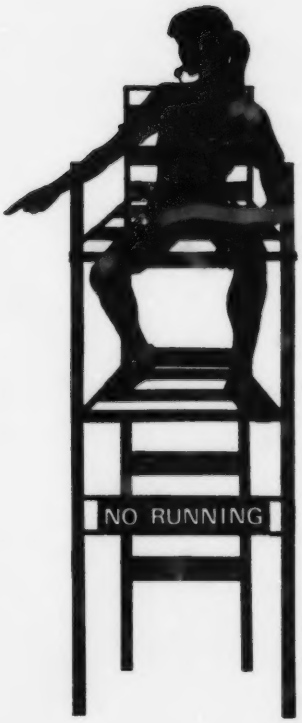
SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR PROGRAMMING SCHOOL AQUATIC EXPERIENCES

PLANNING

A safe and enjoyable water experience is one that has been carefully planned. Before taking the plunge:

- Define the objectives. They could include one or more of the following:
  - introduction to the water
  - learn-to-swim instruction
  - recreational swimming
  - physical fitness
  - competitive swimming
  - basic boating safety.
- Define the nature of the experience. Decide whether students' aquatic experience will be structured or unstructured, and think about what that means in terms of teacher preparation and involvement.
- For structured aquatic experiences (lessons and various activities):
  - facilities may need skill-screening time
  - documented records of students' swimming ability may be needed
  - teacher assistance may be needed for group division and handling of disruptive behaviour.
- For instructional aquatic experiences (playtime):
  - activities must still be planned to avoid boredom
  - students should never swim alone
  - teacher supervision may be needed for group activities and handling of disruptive behaviour.

RESEARCHING



Before heading to the local pool or waterfront:

- Know the facility. Request an orientation to:
  - become familiar with the operating hours, physical aspects and rules of the facility, such as pool depth and width, and location of bathrooms and changing rooms
  - explore how the facility and its personnel can help meet educational objectives
  - gain an understanding of the role of aquatic staff, including:
    - lifeguards, who are trained to anticipate, prevent and respond to emergency situations
    - instructors, who are trained to teach water safety, swimming skills and a range of water-related activities
    - the pool manager or programmer, who acts as a resource in helping teachers identify the type of aquatic experience appropriate for the class
  - clarify the participation expected of teachers, parent volunteers.

- Assess the abilities of students. Plans may be affected by widely differing skill levels. To assess those skills:
  - request screening by facility staff
  - ask student for a record card (e.g., Red Cross) of previous experience, if one exists
  - ask parents for written assessment of their child's abilities.

- Consider scheduling and finances:
  - What time best suits the school?
  - What time does the pool open?
  - How many times per week are needed?
  - Are there seasonal constraints?

- Will busing be necessary and at what cost?
- What are the rental/lifeguard costs?
- How much will lessons cost per student?
- What school funding is available?
- Will parents be asked to pay?

OBTAINING PARENTAL PERMISSION

In all cases, written permission from parents or guardians should be obtained for each student before they take part in an aquatic experience. Requests for assessments of swimming ability and necessary medical background should be made at the same time.

PREPARING STUDENTS

- Introduce water safety in the classroom. Resources are available from Red Cross branches, the Royal Lifesaving Society of Canada, local scuba-diving schools or at the pool.

- Review emergency procedures with students. Consult with the pool operators and discuss in class:

  - whistle signals
  - the buddy system: accounting for the buddy before, during and after class
  - a common gathering spot
  - which students have first aid training
  - taking attendance before and after the class.

- Establish procedures for the day. Consult with the pool staff and discuss in class:

  - busing
  - pool entry/exit routine
  - head counts/attendance
  - acceptable pool behaviour linked to water safety.

PUTTING SAFETY FIRST

- Things to watch for:
  - water depth drop-offs
  - diving board dangers
    - double barriers
  - swimmers below
    - more than one diver
  - checking how deep the water is before diving
  - leisure facilities
    - slides that empty into deep water
  - varying skill levels between friends who insist on playing or swimming together
  - snorkelling
    - disorientation due to water in mask
  - use of flotation devices by non-swimmers
    - waterfront settings (lakes, ponds, rivers)
    - drop-offs
    - weeds
    - currents.

- Should a swimming incident or accident occur, it is important to:
  - let the lifeguard/instructor take the lead
  - react as positively as possible
  - provide support by:
    - distracting other students with another activity
    - providing a personal or medical history of the child if required.

EVALUATING THE EXPERIENCE

The teacher, the class and the facility staff all have a role in building safer and more enjoyable water outings in the future. After your outing, take the time to:

- evaluate if objectives were met
- find out how students felt about the experience
- develop recommendations for improvement for the next outing
- provide feedback to the facility on their program or venue
- "log" the findings to help improve future planning.

PRINCIPAL, TEACHER AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the principal, teachers and school staff to provide playground supervision. They should be aware that if they skip an assigned supervision, they are potentially liable due to negligent behaviour. If an accident occurs when they should have been on supervision, they will be held responsible in the courts.

They should:

- Develop and discuss rules and regulations with students and post in a suitable place.
- Recognize and report potential hazards (e.g., broken glass and other litter).

CREATIVE PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

- Check equipment regularly to make sure it is in good repair.
- Instruct children in the safe use of all equipment and structures.
- Stagger class use of structures.
- Provide adequate space around all structures.
- Select and limit use of structures and equipment according to weather conditions.
- Use colour codes to indicate appropriate ages for use of different equipment and structures.
- Ensure that all structures are firmly anchored or secured.
- Ensure that the surface under all structures is constructed of impact-absorbing material.
- Ensure that equipment and surfaces follow CSA approved standards.

Injuries may occur while travelling to, from or between program sites. To ensure that the insurable risks are appropriately covered by the school board's and/or driver's insurance company, the following checklist should be completed prior to departure.

- When securing a vehicle or chartered public transport, check that the employer has third party auto liability insurance that covers the intended drivers.

- If renting or chartering a vehicle, review the terms of the contract carefully and clarify any grey areas.

- Teachers/leaders, parents or students should not transport other passengers on school related trips unless they carry at least $1 million personal liability and personal indemnity insurance. Drivers should notify their insurance agents of their intention to transport students, especially if the driving is to be done on a regular basis.

- Be sure drivers are appropriately licensed for the vehicle(s) and number of passengers involved.

- Check the condition of the vehicle (e.g., lights, tires, brakes, fluids) and ensure that it is equipped with spare keys, a spare tire, jack, tire iron, a fire extinguisher and other emergency equipment which the trip may dictate (e.g., snow tires and chains, jumper cables, block heater, blankets, first aid kits, shovel and "quickstart" for winter travel).

- Ensure that participants are properly seated in the vehicle and use seat belts where available. They should not ride in open bed trucks or perched atop piles of gear.

- Put gear (skis, paddles, and all sports equipment) in a carrier outside the passenger compartment (e.g., in trailer, rooftop carriers) or lashed down under seats.

- Establish and maintain safety procedures for all vehicles, including safety education, loading and unloading, seating supervision and emergency procedures.

  e.g., procedures for students using own vehicles to attend physical education or interscholastic activities, and parents driving students to various activities.

  Note: All student transportation must strictly adhere to board policy.

- Remind drivers to avoid driving continuously for extended periods.

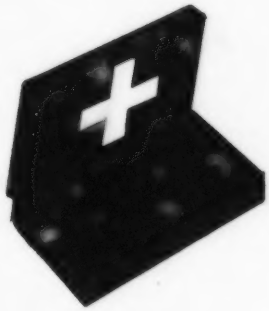
- For winter use, be confident that the vehicle will start in cold weather, or establish a backup system.

- Check for winter driving conditions and check that proposed winter travel routes are plowed on a regular basis or that you can have them cleared for your purposes.

- Park well out of the way of through traffic, and back into parking spots. This reduces the likelihood of becoming trapped or stuck due to snow or muddy conditions.

- If a number of vehicles are being used, make sure each driver has a road or sketch map and time schedule of the intended rendezvous point(s).

THE PRINCIPAL'S RESPONSIBILITIES



- Ensure that several teachers, support staff and administrators have current first aid certification.
- Encourage at least two or three staff members in every school to obtain Standard First Aid and CPP certificates. These are excellent professional development activities. First aid courses are available from St. John Ambulance, Canadian Red Cross and Sport Medicine Council of Alberta.
- Plan and prepare for emergencies.
- Instruct staff to send for help in emergencies and never leave a group unsupervised.
- Adhere to local board policy on the administration of any drugs to students.
- Assign a staff member the responsibility of ensuring that first aid supplies are available.
- Ensure that all staff know where the first aid supplies are stored.
- Keep rubber gloves in the first aid kit, and encourage their use whenever a "bleeding injury" has occurred.
- Develop a system for reporting accidents.
- Post accident procedures near the office telephone and the intercom system. Procedures should include:
  - list of teachers with first aid qualifications
  - ambulance, fire and poison centre telephone numbers.
- Ensure that all staff, secretaries, caretakers, teachers and administrators realize that accidents take first priority.

- Review accident procedures regularly at staff meetings.
- Make phone numbers of parents and guardians easily accessible on a rotating file system.
- Encourage the use of certified athletic trainers for interschool athletics.

HANDLING EMERGENCIES

All teachers must know what to do when an injury occurs in the school. There are basic procedures that can prevent further injury before first aid is administered.

- When a child is injured, stop all activity, attend to him/her and send someone to the office for help.
- Stay calm and take control.
- When in doubt, err on the side of caution.
- Assess the situation.
- Know your limitations.
- If in doubt, phone for an ambulance or a doctor.
- Always contact a parent or guardian. If they cannot be contacted, the principal or vice-principal must take the responsibility to seek medical assistance.
- Always fill out an accident report after administering first aid treatment.

For further information, refer to the Safety in the Playspace poster series, other relevant first aid resources, such as the St. John Ambulance and Canadian Red Cross Society programs.

FIRST AID TREATMENT FOR SPECIFIC INJURIES

CUTS AND SCRATCHES

Treatment

When there is a minimal amount of bleeding or bleeding has been controlled:

- Wash with soap and water using a clean cloth.
- Rinse with water or 3% hydrogen peroxide.
- Apply a band-aid when the area around the wound is dry.
- For larger cuts and scratches, use a gauze pad held in place with strips of adhesive tape.

FRACTURES

Signs

The following may be observed:

- swelling and changes in colour or deformity
- bone ends sticking out (bleeding)
- unnatural movement or inability to move.

Symptoms

The person may complain of:

- pain (worse with movement) or tenderness
- grating sensation and sounds when bone ends rub together.

Treatment

If a fracture is suspected:

- do not move the injured part
- steady and support the injured limb
- keep the victim warm
- obtain medical help as per school accident procedures.

HEAD INJURY

Any fall or hit on the head must be carefully assessed.

Signs

The following may be observed:

- confused behaviour or unconsciousness
- fluids or bleeding from the ears or nose, or both
- breathing problems
- unequal size of eye pupils
- vomiting or seizures
- numbness or lack of use of body parts.

Symptoms

The person may complain of:

- dizziness or memory loss
- nausea or headaches.

As well, the person may:

- repeat the same phrase or question over and over
- demonstrate a change in normal behaviour.

Treatment

- For an unconscious person:
  - make sure the person is breathing
  - keep the air way open
  - suspect a spinal injury and do not let the neck move.
- If the person is conscious, keep the person comfortable and under observation.
- Obtain medical help as per school accident procedures.
  Head injuries should be considered serious. If you observe any of the above signs or symptoms, the person should be referred to a physician.

NOSEBLEEDS

Treatment

- Have person sit with head bent forward to avoid swallowing blood. If the victim is lying down, turn head to the side so the nose points slightly downward.
- Severe or persistent bleeding can be stopped by firmly pinching the lower part of the nose. Pinch the nostrils with thumb and forefinger for 10 minutes. If bleeding reoccurs, repeat. Release pressure slowly and gently.
- Instruct person not to blow the nose.
- If bleeding continues, apply a cold cloth or ice pack across the bridge of the nose.
- If bleeding continues or reoccurs after the above procedure has been followed, medical attention is required.

SEVERE BLEEDING

Treatment

- Apply firm, direct pressure to the area using a clean or sterilized bandage.
- Elevate the part well above the heart.
- Place person at rest. Do not remove blood-soaked dressings; apply other pads or dressings over top. When bleeding is controlled, then bandage and immobilize.
- Seek medical help as per school accident procedures.

SPINAL INJURIES

Signs

The following may be observed:

- lack of arm and/or leg use
- unconsciousness
- numbness in arm(s) and/or leg(s).

Symptoms

The person may complain of:

- spinal pain or not wanting to move

Treatment

- If the person must be moved, support the entire spine and only move as little as possible.
- Follow school accident procedures.

SPRAINS AND STRAINS LIGAMENTS/MUSCLES

Signs and Symptoms

Degrees of ligament/muscle tear:

- minor fibre damage; no loss of function, weight-bearing possible; mild pain, slight swelling, stable.
- partial tearing of ligament/muscle; some functional loss, weight-bearing painful; pain, obvious swelling, stable.
- complete tear of ligaments or muscle; complete functional loss, cannot bear weight; marked pain and swelling, instability with ligament injury.

Treatment

R.I.C.E. = Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation

- Do an initial inspection of the injured area.
- As soon as possible, apply an ice pack directly to the injured area. The ice pack should be wrapped firmly in place over the injured area and provide compression with a wide elastic wrap (or tensor bandage). Be sure to check circulation.
- Elevate the injured body part well above the level of the heart.
- Leave the ice pack in place for 20 minutes.
- After removing the ice pack, continue compression and elevation to the injured body part.

- Ice should be applied for 20 minutes every 2 hours during the first 48 hours.
- Use compression, at all times, except while the patient is sleeping.
- Elevation should continue as often as it is practical during this time.
- Follow school accident procedures.

RESOURCES

- Athletic First Aid Course Manual. Sport Medicine Council of Alberta, 1991.
- Education Law in Canada. Wayne A. MacKay. Edmond-Montgomery Publications Limited, 1984.
- Emergency First Aid Manual. (18th Edition) Canadian Red Cross Society.
- Emergency First Aid. St. John Ambulance, 1990.
- Pocket Guide to First Aid. St. John Ambulance, 1988.
- Safety and Legal Responsibility: A Manual for Physical Activities for Supervisors and Administrators. CIRA.
- Safety in the Gymnasium Checklist Kit. Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (CAHPER).
- Safety in the Playspace poster series. Alberta Education, Alberta Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, Sport Medicine Council of Alberta.
  - Safety in the Playspace
  - Playground Safety
  - Safe Exercises
  - First Aid
  - Safety Practices in the Weight Room
- Sport, Physical Activity and the Law, Raymond Brown, Dick Moriarty, Marge Prpich. Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (CAPHER). Government of Canada, Fitness and Amateur Sports, 1984.
- Standard First Aid. St. John Ambulance, 1990.
- Water Safety Instructor Guide and Reference. Canadian Red Cross Society, 1983.

SAMPLE ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

Activity _____
Activity supervisor _____

Time of accident _____ Date of accident _____
Place of accident _____

Identification of participant(s) involved in accident:
Name: _____ _____
Address: _____ _____
_____ _____

Description of accident (continue on reverse if necessary):
_____
_____

Causes and contributing factors:
_____
_____

Description of injury(ies) and/or property damage: _____
_____
_____

Immediate action taken by supervisor on duty and/or others
(please be as specific as possible): _____
_____

Parent/guardian called? _____ When? _____
By whom? _____

Medical unit called? _____ . If yes, give arrival time _____
Diagnosis of medical unit _____
Immediate treatment given by medical unit _____
_____

Injured person(s) taken to hospital? _____
If so, by whom? _____

Witness (name): _____
Phone number: _____
Address: _____
_____
_____

Signature of Reporter: _____ Date _____
Name (print) _____ Telephone No. _____

Medical clearance required? _____
If so date given: _____

SAMPLE EQUIPMENT
SAFETY AND REPAIR CHECK

School _____ Date _____
Signed _____

EQUIPMENT	No.	OK	COMMENTS	DATE COMPLETED	INITIALS
High Jump, Cross Bars and Standards					
- cross bars free of splinters					
- clamps - sharp edges					
- bases					
Trestle Equipment					
- rails for splinters					
- hooks					
- feet, stability					
- "A" frame locks					
- attachments - hooks					
- covers for rips					
Floor Goals					
- welds					
- sharp edges					
Storage Carts					
- casters					
- sharp edges					
Small Equipment					
- splinters in bows, arrows					
- clubs, bats, sticks, hoops					
- straps, hooks, etc., on protection pads (goalie)					
- face masks and helmets					

SAMPLE EQUIPMENT
SAFETY AND REPAIR CHECK (continued)

EQUIPMENT	No.	OK	COMMENTS	DATE COMPLETED	INITIALS
Benches					
– splinters					
– bolts and stability					
Volleyball Posts					
– ratchets					
– hooks					
Beat Boards					
Mats					
– tears and holes					
– handles and velcro					
– foam condition					
Landing Mats					
– zippers					
– handles					
– tears and holes					
Crash and Jump Mats					
– zippers					
– covers					
– foam					
Wrestling Surface					
– holes					
– foam condition					
Trampoline and Mini Tramp					
– bed stitching					
– frame hooks					
– cables					
– frame pads					
– frame and bolts					

SAMPLE EQUIPMENT
SAFETY AND REPAIR CHECK (continued)

EQUIPMENT	No.	OK	COMMENTS	DATE COMPLETED	INITIALS
Balance Beams					
– leg mechanism					
– cover/splinters					
– stability					
Vault Horse or Box					
– rips in cover					
– stability (legs)					
– splinters					
– rungs and dowels					
– leg adjustors					
– section locks					
Pommel Horse					
– rips in cover					
– secure legs					
– pommel screws					
– stability					
High Bar					
– rail - smooth, no rust					
– chains and turn buckles					
– uprights and pins					
Parallel Bars					
– rails for splinters					
– height adjusters					
– width adjusters					
– pins on height adjusters					
– pivot bolts					

SAMPLE EQUIPMENT
SAFETY AND REPAIR CHECK (continued)

EQUIPMENT	No.	OK	COMMENTS	DATE COMPLETED	INITIALS
Uneven Bars					
- rails for splits					
- chains and turnbuckles					
- width adjusters					
- pins on height adjusters					
- pivot bolts					
Weight Machine					
- pulleys and cable					
- bolts and pins					
- weights and frame					
- handles, benches, seats					
Free Weights					
- storage racks					
- safety racks					
- collars, bars, pins					

SAMPLE MEDICAL INFORMATION CARD

Name _____
Address _____
_____
Telephone No. _____

Birthdate _____
Provincial Health No. _____
Insurance Plan Name and No. _____

Contact Names/Telephone Numbers

In Emergency Notify (1) _____
_____
Telephone No. (day) _____
(evening) _____

In Emergency Notify (2) _____
_____
Telephone No. (day) _____
(evening) _____

Physician _____ Physician's Telephone No. _____
Dentist _____ Dentist's Telephone No. _____

Medical History

Blood Type _____

Allergies (e.g., penicillin) _____
_____

Ongoing Medical Problems (e.g., asthma, chronic injuries)
_____
_____

Current Medications and or Supplements (e.g., type and frequency, time of last intake)
_____
_____

Past Operations_____
_____
_____

Contact Lenses	☐ yes	☐ no
Dentures or Dental Appliances	☐ yes	☐ no
Orthopedic Braces	☐ yes	☐ no

Specify _____

Tetanus Shot (in the last 10 years)	☐ yes	☐ no